

# Hepatitis B

## Fact Sheet

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis  
1-888-4HEP-CDC



<b>SIGNS &amp; SYMPTOMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>jaundice</li> <li>fatigue</li> <li>abdominal pain</li> <li>loss of appetite</li> <li>nausea, vomiting</li> <li>joint pain</li> </ul> <p>About 30% of persons have no sign or symptoms. Signs and symptoms are less common in children than adults.</p>
<b>CAUSE</b>	Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)
<b>LONG-TERM EFFECTS WITHOUT VACCINATION</b>	<p>Chronic infection occurs in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of infants infected at birth</li> <li>30% of children infected at age 1 – 5 years</li> <li>6% of persons infected after age 5 years</li> </ul> <p>Death from chronic liver disease occurs in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 – 25% of chronically infected persons</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurs when blood or body fluids from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not immune.</li> <li>HBV is spread through having sex with an infected person without using a condom, sharing needles or “works” when “shooting” drugs, through needlesticks or sharps exposures on the job, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.</li> </ul> <p>Persons at risk for HBV infection might also be at risk for infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) or HIV.</p>
<b>RISK GROUPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons with multiple sex partners or diagnosis of a sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>Men who have sex with men</li> <li>Sex contacts of infected persons</li> <li>Injection drug users</li> <li>Household contacts of chronically infected persons</li> <li>Infants born to infected mothers</li> <li>Infants/children of immigrants from areas with high rates of HBV infection</li> <li>Health care and public safety workers</li> <li>Hemodialysis patients</li> </ul>
<b>PREVENTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection.</li> <li>If you are having sex, but not with one steady partner, use latex condoms* correctly and every time you have sex.</li> <li>If you are pregnant, you should get a blood test for hepatitis B. Infants born to HBV-infected mothers should be given H-BIG (hepatitis B immune globulin) and vaccine within 12 hours after birth.</li> <li>Do not shoot drugs. If you shoot drugs, stop and get into a treatment program. If you can’t stop, never share needles, syringes, water, or “works”, and get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B.</li> <li>Do not share personal care items that might have blood on them (razors, toothbrushes).</li> <li>Consider the risks if you are thinking about getting a tattoo or body piercing. You might get infected if the tools have someone else’s blood on them or if the artist or piercer does not follow good health practices.</li> <li>If you have or had hepatitis B, do not donate blood, organs, or tissue.</li> <li>If you are a health care or public safety worker, get vaccinated against hepatitis B, and always follow routine barrier precautions and safely handle needles and other sharps.</li> </ul>

# Hepatitis B

## Fact Sheet

Page2

[www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

1-888-4HEP-CDC



<b>VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Hepatitis B vaccine available since 1982.</li><li>▪ Routine vaccination of 0 – 18 year olds.</li><li>▪ Vaccination of risk groups of all ages (see section on risk groups)</li></ul>
<b>TREATMENT &amp; MEDICAL MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ HBV infected persons should be evaluated by their doctor for liver disease.</li><li>▪ Adefovir dipivoxil, alpha interferon and lamivudine are three drugs licensed for the treatment of persons with chronic hepatitis B.</li><li>▪ These drugs should not be used by pregnant women.</li><li>▪ Drinking alcohol can make your liver disease worse.</li></ul>
<b>TRENDS &amp; STATISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Number of new infections per year has declined from an estimated 260,000 in the 1980s to about 78,000 in 2001.</li><li>▪ Highest rate of disease occurs in 20 – 49 year olds.</li><li>▪ Greatest decline has happened among children and adolescents due to routine hepatitis B vaccination.</li><li>▪ Estimated 1.25 million chronically infected Americans, of whom 20 – 30% acquired their infection in childhood.</li></ul>

\* The efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission.

This page last updated: August 6, 2003